

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 IO-14 ISO-00 SAB-01 SAM-01 CIAE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1652

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEBASSY BEIRUT

USINT CAIRO

USMISSION GENEVA

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

USINT DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 1106

GENEVA FOR MEPC DEL

LONDON FOR THE SECRETARY'S PARTY

DAMASCUS FOR SECRETARY'S PARTY

E O 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, IS

SUBJ: FORMATION OF NEW GOVERNMENT: STATUS REPORT

REF: TEL AVIV 1082

1. MRS MEIR'S EFFORTS TO PUT TOGETHER NAMES FOR NEW CABINET
HINGE ON CONTINUED INTENSE MANEUVERING BETWEEN AND WITHIN
MAJOR PARTIES IN PAREPARATION FOR KNESSET VOTE OF CONFIDENCE,
AT PRESENT STILL EXPECTED TO TAKE PLACE MARCH 4.

2. KEY QUESTION NOW IS ATTITUDE OF DAYAN'S RAFI FACTION OF
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LABOR PARTY. SOME MEMBERS OBJECT TO DAYAN-PERES POSITION
THAT THEY WILL SUPPORT NEW GOVT DESPITE THEIR DECISION

AGAINST SERVING IN CABINET. OPPONENTS TO THIS POSITION REPORTEDLY BELIEVE THAT RAFI SHOULD TAKE CLEARCUT POSITION AGAINST FORMATION OF MINORITY GOVT BY PRECIPITATING NEW ELECTIONS AT EARLY DATE. THIS THEY BELIEVE THEY CAN DO EVEN WITHOUT COOPERATION OF DAYAN AND PERES BECAUSE MRS MEIR STATED AT FEB 24 CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING THAT SHE WOULD LEAD NEW MINORITY GOVT ONLY IF SHE ENJOYED SUPPORT OF ALL 54 LABOR ALIGNMENT MEMBERS.

3. NATIONAL RELIGIOUS PARTY'S TEN KNESSET MEMBERS ARE MEETING AT NOON TODAY TO DECIDE WHETHER TO OBSTAIN OR VOTE AGAINST NEW GOVT. WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE NRP IS DIVIDED ON WHAT TO DO, WITH SOME MEMBERS WILLING TO GIVE MRS MEIR MORE TIME TO WORK OUT AN ACCOMMODATION WITH THEM AND OTHERS FEELING THAT NEW ELECTIONS ARE INEVITABLY ANYWAY AND THE EARLIER THE BETTER.

4. INDEPENDENT LIBERALS, ALSO SENSING OPPORTUNITY TO IMPROVE THEIR POSITION AND AWARE OF LABOR LEADERSHIP NEED FOR THEIR COLLABORATION, HAVE DEMANDED SECOND MINISTRY. OUR CURRENT READING IS THAT GIDEON HAUSNER WILL BECOME MINISTER WITHOUT PORTFOLIO, ALTHOUGH HIS SIGHTS HAVE BEEN ON JUSTICE PORTFOLIO SLATED FOR ZADOK.

5. COMMENT: A VARIETY OF SURPRISES NOW SEEM POSSIBLE. COLLAPSE IN NEXT FEW DAYS OF EFFORTS TO FORM NEW GOVT CANNOT BE RULED OUT, IN WHICH CASE PREPARATIONS, WHICH NORMALLY LAST THREE MONTHS, FOR NEW KNESSET ELECTION WOULD BEGIN, AND PRESENT CARETAKER GOVT WOULD CONTINUE TO RULE UNTIL ELECTION. MEANWHILE DAYAN IS SCHEDULED TO PARTICIPATE IN TALKS DURING SECRETARY'S VISIT (FOR EXAMPLE, HE IS A PARTICIPANT IN PRIMIN'S DINNER, EVENING FEB 28). ACCORDING TO MFA, DAYAN HAS ALSO MADE DECISION NOT REPEAT NOT TO GO TO US FOR ISRAEL BONDS IN EARLY MARCH DESPITE PRESS REPORTS TO CONTRARY.
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